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BRIEFING BOOK ON VIET-NAM

February, 1968



Department of State

QUESTION #2

WHY DON'T WE NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE WAR RIGHT NOW?

I. WE HAVE TRIED APPROACH AFTER APPROACH.

We have tried approach after approach -- public and private -- but each time we confront an uncompromisingly negative attitude on the part of Hanoi. We have contacted Hanoi directly on many occasions and indirectly through third countries on many others. We have sought four times to bring the issue before the United Nations Security Council. We have six times stopped our bombing of the North.

We remain willing to talk with any government in any forum. We are prepared to talk without or about conditions. We are ready to negotiate on the basis of the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962.

Hanoi recently indicated there "will" be talks if the United States stops "unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam." (2-1)

II. WHERE WE STAND TODAY

The most significant recent exchange of views between the United States and North Viet-Nam has focused on President Johnson's speech in San Antonio on September 29, 1967.

- The President stated that "The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation." (2-5)
- Hanoi's reply was decidedly negative and was reflected in an article from Hanoi on October 21: "There is no possibility of any talks or even contacts between Hanoi and the U.S. government unless the bombardment and other acts of war against North Viet-Nam are definitively halted." (2-6)

- Then on December 29, 1967, Nguyen Duy Trinh, Vice Premier of North Viet-Nam, stated that if the U. S. stops "unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war" against North Viet-Nam "the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam will hold talks with the United States on questions concerned. " (2-6)
- Secretary Rusk in a January 4 press conference stated that the Trinh statement "leaves a great many questions open" and that "we need to explore fully what is behind this statement. " (2-7)
- In an interview on January 14, Mai Van Bo, a principal spokesman for North Viet-Nam in Paris, elaborated upon the Trinh statement. He was asked what North Viet-Nam meant by "the cessation of all other acts of war" and replied: "The cessation of any military action that violates the sovereignty and the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. " (2-9)
- In his State of the Union Address on January 17, President Johnson reiterated the San Antonio formula as the basis for any U. S. decision to halt the bombing. (2-10)
- Secretary-Designate of Defense Clark M. Clifford discussed the San Antonio formula before the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 25. He was asked what was meant by North Viet-Nam's not "taking advantage" of a bombing cessation. He replied: "I assume that they will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, munitions, men, to South Viet-Nam. I assume that we will continue to maintain our forces and support our forces during that period. " (2-11)

III. OUR FLEXIBILITY

Our approach toward negotiations is characterized by flexibility-- in stark contrast to the intransigence of North Viet-Nam.

A. We will talk without or about conditions.

The U. S. has reaffirmed its willingness to "talk unconditionally" on many occasions. On October 22, Secretary Rusk stated: "We are prepared to talk without conditions, which they won't do. We are prepared to talk about conditions, which they have refused to do. So we... have a problem on our hands. " (2-13)

B. We are prepared for discussions in any forum.

1. Geneva Machinery

Points 1 and 2 from the 14 Points for Peace state U. S. willingness to negotiate on the basis of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962. We are ready for a re-convening of a Geneva Conference. (2-15)

2. United Nations

a. Our desire to see the United Nations play a role:

The United States has repeated many times its desire to have the United Nations take up the question of Viet-Nam. A resolution is now pending before the Security Council. (2-19)

b. North Vietnamese resistance to a United Nations role:

North Viet-Nam has stated that the United Nations has "no jurisdiction whatsoever" in the Viet-Nam problem and that any U. N. Security Council resolution intervening would be considered "null and void." (2-21)

c. Our efforts to bring the Viet-Nam problem before the Security Council:

On at least four occasions, the United States has made a concerted effort to engage the U. N. Security Council directly in the search for peace. (2-23)

- August 1964 when Ambassador Stevenson tried to bring the Tonkin incident before the Security Council;

- July 1965 when President Johnson, in a letter to the Secretary General, reiterated his hope that the influence of the UN could be exerted to bring the conflict to the negotiating table;

- January 1966 when Ambassador Goldberg, as part of a concentrated peace effort, requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council;

- September 1967 when the United States introduced a five-point resolution which it believed the Security Council might endorse in seeking an agreement based on the Geneva Accords.

3. Asian Conference

The United States responded favorably to the suggestion of the Foreign Ministers of Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines in August 1966 that 17 Asian nations call a conference on the conflict. (2-25)

C. We have attempted a variety of contacts with North Viet-Nam and have responded favorably to any number of proposals for peace.

1. Direct exchange of views

On at least five separate occasions the United States has sought direct contacts with North Viet-Nam. Beyond the exchanges referred to in Section II, an exchange of letters between President Johnson and Ho Chi Minh in February 1967, a concerted peace initiative in late 1965 and early 1966, and the President's Johns Hopkins appeal for unconditional discussions may be cited. (2-27)

2. Third country initiatives and proposals

Many proposals and initiatives have been favorably received by the United States while being categorically rejected by North Viet-Nam. Among them have been: three British proposals; two Canadian attempts; a Ceylonese proposal; an Indian proposal; a Polish attempt; a proposal of the Thais, Malaysians and Filipinos; a proposal of 17 non-aligned nations; a proposal of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. (2-31)

3. Initiatives of U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations

Secretary General U Thant's initiatives have generally received the support of the United States:

- March 1967: a three-point proposal calling for a stand-still truce, preliminary talks, and reconvening of the Geneva Conference;
- December 1966: Ambassador Goldberg urged the Secretary General to take whatever steps he considered necessary to bring about discussions which could lead to a ceasefire;

- August 1966: a three-step proposal including cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam, mutual reduction of hostilities and willingness to negotiate with all participants to the fighting;
- April 1965: a willingness to visit certain capitals, including Hanoi and Peking, to discuss proposals for a peaceful settlement. (2-37)

D. We have agreed that the NLF could be represented in any forum and would have no difficulty making its views known.

1. NLF role in negotiations or talks

The President has several times made it clear that the NLF would have no difficulty in making its views known to us. (2-39)

2. NLF role in political settlement in South

The United States has made it clear that its objective is that the South Vietnamese people determine their own future without external interference. The imposition of any coalition government would be at variance with this principle.

The United States would oppose any proposal which would turn the government of South Viet-Nam over to the NLF. But we have also made clear that we do not wish to exclude any segment of the South Vietnamese people from peaceful participation in their country's future. (2-43)

E. We want no military bases in the area and are prepared to withdraw our forces when those from the North are also withdrawn.

Point 7 of the 14 Points for Peace states that "we want no U. S. bases in Southeast Asia." Point 8 states that "we do not desire to retain U. S. troops in South Viet-Nam after peace is assured." Point 5 of the Manila Communique (October 25, 1966) states that "the people of South Viet-Nam will ask their allies to remove their forces and evacuate their installations as the military and subversive forces of North Viet-Nam are withdrawn, infiltration ceases, and the level of violence thus subsides." (2-45)

IV. WE HAVE STOPPED THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITHOUT ANY POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM HANOI

Specific pauses include:

- May 13-17, 1965: This was denounced as a "trick" by Hanoi.
- December 24, 1965 - January 30, 1966: During this long pause Hanoi was informed publicly that if it would reciprocate by taking some concrete step to reduce its military effort in the South, the pause might be extended. Hanoi responded that the pause was a "hoax" and "deceit."
- December 24-26, 1966 and December 31, 1966- January 2, 1967: These holiday pauses were marred by 178 incidents violating the cease fire.
- February 8-12, 1967: During this suspension the South Vietnamese Government expressed its willingness to meet with North Vietnamese representatives to discuss suspension of military activity. Photographic evidence shows that North Viet-Nam used the period to re-supply their troops in the South with an estimated 23,000 tons of supplies.
- May 23, 1967: A 24-hour cease fire was observed by the Allies fighting in South Viet-Nam in observance of Buddha's birthday.
- December 24-25, 1967 and December 31, 1967 - January 1, 1968: During these holiday bombing pauses, of 24 and 36 hours respectively, there were over 100 enemy-initiated incidents of major proportions involving several hundred casualties. It is estimated that several thousand tons of supplies could have been moved from North to South to supply North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops for several months.
- The U. S. and GVN announced agreement in December 1967 to a 48-hour standdown at Tet. The duration was reduced to 36 hours on January 20 as a result of Communist violations of the Christmas and New Year's standdowns. With the build-up of NVA/VC troops at Khe Sanh and in the DMZ, the GVN canceled the standdown on January 30. (2-47)

V. HANOI'S INTRANSIGENCE

A. Hanoi's Four Points

North Viet-Nam insists that any peace in Southeast Asia must be based on its Four Points. In brief they are:

1. U. S. must stop its acts of war against North Viet-Nam and withdraw all its forces from South Viet-Nam.
2. Pending the peaceful reunification of Viet-Nam there must be no foreign military base or troops in Viet-Nam.
3. The internal affairs of South Viet-Nam must be settled in accord with the NLFSV program.
4. The peaceful reunification of Viet-Nam is to be settled by the Vietnamese people without any foreign interference. (2-49)

B. Unacceptability of Point Three

Acceptance of Hanoi's Point Three would be tantamount to the abandonment of the basic objective of our policy in Viet-Nam -- the freedom of South Viet-Nam from attack and the right for South Viet-Nam to decide its own political future.

The United States has indicated the unacceptability of Point Three, but has indicated it is willing to talk about it. (2-51)

VI: OUR APPROACH TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS

A. Our Eagerness to Negotiate

All our recent Presidents have testified to our country's dedication to negotiation as a means of peacefully bridging differences. (2-53)

B. Need for Firmness with Restraint

Yet it is essential to the search for peace in Asia to prove that aggression will not be permitted to succeed. (2-55)

C. Our View of the Essential Elements for Peace

There have been several authoritative statements of what we regard to be the essential elements of peace in Southeast Asia: the Fourteen Points; South Viet-Nam's Four Points; the Manila Communique; Ambassador Goldberg's discussion of the meaning of the Geneva Agreements; and President Johnson's Five Points. (2-57)

Principal among these are the Fourteen Points as elaborated by Secretary Rusk in January 1967: (2-57)

1. The Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 are an adequate basis for peace in Southeast Asia.
2. We would welcome a conference on Southeast Asia or any part thereof:
 - We are ready to negotiate a settlement based on a strict observance of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements, which observance was called for in the declaration on Viet-Nam of the meeting of the Warsaw Pact countries in Bucharest on July 6, 1966. And we will support a reconvening of the Geneva Conference, or an Asian conference, or any other generally acceptable forum.
3. We would welcome "negotiations without preconditions" as called for by 17 non-aligned nations in an appeal delivered to Secretary Rusk on April 1, 1966.
4. We would welcome "unconditional discussions" as called for by President Johnson on April 7, 1966:
 - If the other side will not come to a conference, we are prepared to engage in direct discussions or discussions through an intermediary.
5. A cessation of hostilities could be the first order of business at a conference or could be the subject of preliminary discussions:
 - We have attempted, many times, to engage the other side in a discussion of a mutual de-escalation of the level of violence, and we remain prepared to engage in such a mutual deescalation.
 - We stand ready to cooperate fully in getting discussions which could lead to a cessation of hostilities started promptly and brought to a successful completion.

6. Hanoi's four points could be discussed along with other points which others may wish to propose:
 - We would be prepared to accept preliminary discussions to reach agreement on a set of points as a basis for negotiations.
7. We want no U.S. bases in Southeast Asia:
 - We are prepared to assist in the conversion of these bases for peaceful uses that will benefit the peoples of the entire area.
8. We do not desire to retain U.S. troops in South Viet-Nam after peace is assured:
 - We seek no permanent military bases, no permanent establishment of troops, no permanent alliances, no permanent American "presence" of any kind in South Viet-Nam.
 - We have pledged in the Manila Communique that "Allied forces are in the Republic of Viet-Nam because that country is the object of aggression and its government requested support in the resistance of its people to aggression. They shall be withdrawn, after close consultation, as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled."
9. We support free elections in South Viet-Nam to give the South Vietnamese a government of their own choice:
 - We support the development of broadly based democratic institutions in South Viet-Nam.
 - We do not seek to exclude any segment of the South Vietnamese people from peaceful participation in their country's future.

10. The question of reunification of Viet-Nam should be determined by the Vietnamese through their own free decision:
 - It should not be decided by the use of force.
 - We are fully prepared to support the decision of the Vietnamese people.
11. The countries of Southeast Asia can be non-aligned or neutral if that be their option:
 - We do not seek to impose a policy of alignment on South Viet-Nam.
 - We support the neutrality policy of the Royal Government of Laos, and we support the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia.
12. We would much prefer to use our resources for the economic reconstruction of Southeast Asia than in war. If there is peace, North Viet-Nam could participate in a regional effort to which we would be prepared to contribute at least one billion dollars:
 - We support the growing efforts by the nations of the area to cooperate in the achievement of their economic and social goals.
13. The President has said "The Viet Cong would have no difficulty in being represented and having their views presented if Hanoi for a moment decides she wants to cease aggression. And I would not think that would be an insurmountable problem at all. "
14. We have said publicly and privately that we could stop the bombing of North Viet-Nam as a step toward peace although there has not been the slightest hint or suggestion from the other side as to what they would do if the bombing stopped:
 - We are prepared to order a cessation of all bombing of North Viet-Nam, the moment we are assured -- privately or otherwise -- that this step will be answered promptly by

a corresponding and appropriate de-escalation of the other side.

- We do not seek the unconditional surrender of North Viet-Nam; what we do seek is to assure for the people of South Viet-Nam the right to decide their own political destiny, free of force.

2-K

SUMMARY OF PUBLICLY-DISCLOSED U.S. AND THIRD-PARTY EFFORTS TO BRING
PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

1. Laos Conference, *July 23, 1962*
2. UN Security Council invitation to Hanoi, *August 7, 1964*
3. Seventeen non-aligned nations' appeal, *April 1, 1965*
4. President Johnson's speech at Johns Hopkins University, *April 7, 1965*
5. Indian Government's proposal, *April, 1965*
6. UN Secretary General U Thant's peace efforts, *April, 1965*
7. Suspension of bombing, *May 12-17, 1965*
8. Commonwealth Prime Ministers' initiative, *June, 1965*
9. Davies mission, *July, 1965*
10. President's letter to U Thant, *July 28, 1965*
11. Ambassador Goldberg's letter to President of Security Council, *July 30, 1965*
12. Indian/Yugoslav proposal, *August, 1965*
13. United Kingdom twelve-nation appeal, *December 1965*
14. Cambodian proposal for I.C.C. expansion, *December, 1965*
15. Pope Paul VI's appeal, *December 19, 1965*
16. Concentrated peace effort, *December 1965-January 1966*
17. Ronning mission, *June, 1966*
18. Asian Conference initiative, *August 6, 1966*
19. UN Secretary General's proposal, *August 31, 1966*
20. Ambassador Goldberg's General Assembly address, *September 22, 1966*
21. British Six-Point Plan, *October 6, 1966*
22. Manila Communique, *October 25, 1966*
23. Ambassador Goldberg's letter to U Thant, *December 19, 1966*
24. British proposal for cessation of hostilities, *December 30, 1966*
25. Tet (Lunar New Year) truce, *February 8-13, 1967*
26. Presidents Johnson and Ho Chi Minh exchange letters, *February 8, 15, 1967*
27. President's letter to Pope Paul, *February 8, 1967*
28. U Thant's three-point proposal and U.S. acceptance, *March 28, 1967*
29. Ceylonese initiative, *April 10, 1967*
30. Canadian Foreign Minister's four-stage proposal, *April 11, 1967*
31. U.S. and Government of Vietnam welcome Canadian plan, and in response propose mutual withdrawal of forces 10 miles north and south of DMZ, with I.C.C. inspection of enlarged demilitarized area, *April 18-19, 1967*
32. U.S. again explores possibility of Security Council action, early *September 1967*
33. Ambassador Goldberg's UNGA speech. Hanoi asked whether bombing cessation should lead to any other results than meaningful negotiations or discussions under circumstances which would not disadvantage either side, *September 21, 1967*
34. President Johnson, at San Antonio, states U.S. is willing immediately to stop bombing when this will lead promptly to productive discussion, and on assumption that NVN would not take advantage of bombing cessation or limitation, *September 29, 1967*
35. Continuous bilateral contacts with Communist states, including talks with Chinese Communist Ambassador in Warsaw

36. Suspension of bombing:

1. May 12-17, 1965 (five days, 20 hours)
2. December 24, 1965-January 30, 1966 (36 days, 15 hours)
3. December 23-25, 1966 and December 30, 1966-January 1, 1967
(two days and two days)
4. February 8-13, 1967 (five days, 18 hours)
5. May 23-24, 1967 (24 hours)
6. December 24-25, 1967 and December 31, 1967-January 1, 1968
(24 hours and 36 hours, respectively)

2-M

QUESTION #3

SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US WE MUST STOP BOMBING THE NORTH IF WE REALLY WANT TO TALK. WHY DON'T WE?

I. OUR WILLINGNESS TO STOP THE BOMBING WHEN IT WILL LEAD TO PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RESTRAINT

A. San Antonio Proposal

In his speech in San Antonio on September 29, President Johnson stated: "The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation." (3-1)

B. North Viet-Nam's Response

It was authoritatively reported on October 21 that "there is no possibility of any talks or even contacts between Hanoi and the U.S. Government unless the bombardment and other acts of war against North Viet-Nam are definitively halted." (3-3)

C. Trinh Statement

Nguyen Duy Trinh, Vice Premier of North Viet-Nam, stated December 29, 1967 that North Viet-Nam "will hold talks with the United States on questions concerned" if the U.S. will stop "unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam." In his press conference on January 4, Secretary Rusk said that there is need to clarify what the use of the word "will" means and "to explore fully what is behind this statement." In an interview on January 14, Mai Van Bo, a principal spokesman for North Viet-Nam in Paris, elaborated upon the Trinh statement. He was asked what North Viet-Nam meant by "the cessation of all other acts of war" and replied: "The cessation of any military action that violates the sovereignty and the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam." He

noted that "talks will begin after a suitable time following the unconditional halting of the bombing and of all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam." When asked about a possible gesture of reciprocity on the part of North Viet-Nam, he stated: "The U. S. attacked the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, a sovereign, independent country, without a valid reason and without a declaration of war. It constitutes a deliberate aggression and an act of defiance to all men, to all peoples. Consequently the U. S. must put an end to its acts of aggression without laying down any conditions whatsoever." (3-5)

D. Reiteration of San Antonio Formula

In his State of the Union Address on January 17, President Johnson reiterated the San Antonio formula as the basis for any U. S. decision to halt the bombing. The formula was discussed by Secretary-Designate of Defense Clark M. Clifford in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 25. He was asked what was meant by North Viet-Nam's not "taking advantage" of a bombing cessation. He replied: "I assume that they will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, munitions, men, to South Viet-Nam. I assume that we will continue to maintain our forces and support our forces during that period." (3-11)

II. WE HAVE STOPPED THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITHOUT ANY POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM HANOI

A. Specific Pauses Include:

1. May 13-17, 1965: This was denounced as a "trick" by Hanoi.
2. December 24, 1965 - January 30, 1966: During this long pause Hanoi was informed publicly that if it would reciprocate by taking some concrete step to reduce its military effort in the South the pause might be extended. Hanoi responded that the pause was a "hoax" and "deceit."

3. December 24-26, 1966 and December 31, 1966-January 2, 1967: These holiday pauses were marred by 178 incidents violating the cease fire.
4. February 8-12, 1967: During this suspension the South Vietnamese Government expressed its willingness to meet with North Vietnamese representatives to discuss suspension of military activity. Photographic evidence shows that North Viet-Nam used the period to resupply their troops in the South with an estimated 23,000 tons of supplies.
5. May 23, 1967: A 24-hour cease fire was observed by the Allies fighting in South Viet-Nam in observance of Buddha's birthday.
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III. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BOMBING

A. Objectives of the Bombing

1. Specific Objectives: Secretary McNamara has spelled out what the bombing is intended to achieve:
 - a. to reduce the flow and/or to increase the cost of the continued infiltration of men and supplies;
 - b. to raise the morale of the South Vietnamese people;
 - c. to make clear to the North Vietnamese leadership that so long as they continue their aggression in the South they will pay a price in the North. (3-15)
2. Limited Nature of these Objectives: The bombing has never been considered a substitute for an effective counter-insurgency campaign in the South. The bombing campaign has been aimed at selected targets of military significance. (3-17)

3. Selection of Targets: There are four yardsticks against which potential targets are measured: military value of target; risk to pilots; number of possible civilian casualties; risk of widening war. (3-19)

B. Effectiveness

Weighed against the objectives, the bombing campaign has been successful.

1. Diversion of North Vietnamese Manpower: The North Vietnamese have been forced to divert some 500,000 people to the repair and defense of communications and other facilities. (3-21)
2. Increased Cost of Infiltration: Bombing has made more difficult and costly North Vietnamese efforts to supply both their own and Viet Cong troops. Secretary McNamara has indicated that the bombing will not stop completely the infiltration of men and supplies from the North. It has, however, significantly raised the cost of such infiltration. (3-23)
3. Price Paid in the North for Aggression Undertaken in the South: The bombing indicates to the leaders of North Viet-Nam that infiltration of men and supplies into the South will result in diminishing returns in relation to the cost. While it cannot be assured that the bombing will "break the will" of the North Vietnamese to continue the war, it is certainly the case that a high price is being paid in the North for aggression against the South. (3-25)
4. Improved South Vietnamese Morale: In early 1965, South Viet-Nam was on the verge of defeat and morale was at a low ebb. It is now clear that the bombing campaign has been one of several factors raising the morale of the South Vietnamese. (3-27)

NEGOTIATION ATTEMPTS ON VIETNAM

Since 1960, when North Vietnam sharply intensified its attempts to take over the government and people of South Vietnam, the US and other governments have made numerous attempts to reach a peaceful settlement of the interrelated disputes in Southeast Asia. The key public initiatives since February, 1965 are summarized below.

Hanoi and Peking have either rejected or been unresponsive to all these efforts.

February 20, 1965: The UK proposed to the USSR that the British and Soviets undertake as Geneva Co-Chairmen to explore the basis of a possible Vietnam settlement with all the countries participating in the Geneva Conference. The US supported this approach.

Speaking of the NFLSV stand concerning the convening of a Geneva-type conference on Vietnam, a Front spokesman, Huynh Tan Phat, said on March 13, 1965: "The South Vietnamese people cherish peace. However, the US imperialists have sabotaged the Geneva agreements and conducted a war against them. They must bear the responsibility for their war in South Vietnam. That is why, first of all, the US imperialists must withdraw all their troops, military personnel and weapons, and other war material from South Vietnam and let the South Vietnamese people settle themselves their own internal affairs."

April 1, 1965: Seventeen non-aligned nations delivered an appeal for a peaceful solution in Vietnam through negotiations without preconditions. The US, on April 8, welcomed this appeal and indicated our agreement with its principles.

North Vietnam on April 19 rejected the proposal, characterizing as "inappropriate" any approach other than that based on its own preconditions, including the prior withdrawal of US forces and acceptance of the NFLSV program for South Vietnam. Peking on April 21 condemned the appeal for its failure to denounce the US as the aggressor in Vietnam and accused the "Tito clique" of masterminding the document at the behest of the United States.

April 7, 1965: President Johnson stated that the US was prepared to enter into "unconditional discussions" with the other governments concerned in the Vietnam problem.

In an authorized statement on April 19, 1965, Hanoi labeled Johnson's speech a "smokescreen to cover up the US imperialists' military adventures in Vietnam". It noted that in the same speech "Johnson declared that the United States will not withdraw from South Vietnam and will intensify its raids against North Vietnam". The NFLSV Central Committee on May 14, in

commenting on the President's speech, said that "this is the US imperialists' evil effort to create a smokescreen to cover up their colonialist and bellicose nature and their new foolish military actions in South Vietnam". The statement asserted the offer of one billion dollars in aid was an attempt to blackmail the Vietnamese people which is bound to fail. Peking's People's Daily on April 11 termed the President's talk about unconditional discussions as a "swindle pure and simple".

April 1965: It was reported that UN Secretary General U Thant might visit certain capitals, including Hanoi and Peiping, to discuss the prospects for a peaceful settlement in Vietnam. The US supported this as it has other peacemaking efforts by the Secretary General.

Pham Van Dong on April 8 said that any approach tending to secure UN intervention in Vietnam is "inappropriate". On April 12 Peking's People's Daily said that if U Thant is undertaking this trip in his capacity as UN Secretary General, "we should like to tell him in all seriousness to spare himself this trouble" since "the Vietnam question has nothing to do with the United Nations". It added that if Thant was planning the trip as a private individual seeking peace, he should be going to Washington.

April 1965: The British Government sent former Foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon-Walker to visit interested countries and explore once again the basis for a settlement in Vietnam.

Hanoi declined to receive Gordon-Walker. A Peking broadcast of April 12 said that a Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry note of the same date informed the British that a visit to Peking by Gordon-Walker would not be suitable and "he is not welcome".

April 1965: The Indian Government put forward a proposal for the cessation of hostilities by both sides, the policing of borders by an Afro-Asian patrol force, and the maintenance of present boundaries in Vietnam so long as the Vietnamese people desire. The US received this proposal with interest and discussed it with the Government of India.

Hanoi Radio on May 6 announced that the DRV had told India its proposal was "at complete variance with the spirit and basic principles" of the Geneva Agreements and runs counter to India's status as ICC Chairman. On May 9 Peking's People's Daily termed the proposal "a new plot to use the Afro-Asian countries to serve the US aggression against Vietnam".

May 12-17, 1965: The US suspended its bombing operations against North Vietnam. This suspension was made known to the other side to see if there might be a response in kind.

On May 18 Hanoi Radio broadcast a Foreign Ministry statement which called the bombing pause a "trick" meant "to cover up [the 'U.S. aggressors'] extremely dangerous acts intensifying the war in Vietnam... and to deceive world public opinion". On May 21 the Chinese Communist Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement which called the pause "war blackmail" and maintained that the four-point position of the DRV and the five-point position of the NFLSV were the only road to peace.

June 1965: The Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth nations initiated a plan for a special Mission to visit the capitals of the countries involved to "explore the circumstances in which a conference might be held to end the fighting in Vietnam." The US immediately welcomed the Commonwealth initiative.

Hanoi Radio on July 1 stated that the DRV will not receive the Wilson mission because it doubts Wilson's good will toward peace and feels that this mission "is only a repetition of Lyndon Johnson's peace negotiations swindle under the cloak of the British Commonwealth mission on the Vietnam problem". An NFLSV Liberation Press Agency commentary on June 27 characterized the Commonwealth mission as an "odious and demagogic trick" aimed at helping "the US imperialists achieve in the conference room what they cannot achieve on the battlefield". On June 25 the Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry announced that it had informed the British Government that "the Chinese Government sternly rejected a visit to Peking by a mission headed by Britain and composed of the leaders of three other Commonwealth countries concerning the problem of Vietnam".

June 25, 1965: President Johnson called upon members of the UN, "individually and collectively, to bring to the table those who seem determined to make war. We will support your efforts, as we support effective action by any agent or agency of these United Nations."

July 9-13, 1965: Harold Davies, a junior Minister of the British Government, visited Hanoi to explore the willingness of the North Vietnamese government to receive the Commonwealth Mission referred to above.

Prime Minister Wilson reported on July 15 that Davies was unable to obtain North Vietnam's agreement to receive the proposed mission.

July 28, 1965: President Johnson, in a letter to UN Secretary General U Thant, reiterated his hope that "members of the UN, individually and collectively, will use their influence to bring to the negotiating table all governments involved in an attempt to halt all aggression and evolve a peaceful solution."

A commentary in the North Vietnamese paper Nhan Dan of August 4 said President Johnson's peace initiatives "were only aimed at misleading those persons who did not yet understand the situation" and that "the UN card...will fail to help the U.S. imperialists turn the tide". A broadcast of August 6 by the NFLSV's Liberation Radio stated: "The NFLSV Central Committee once again solemnly asserts that the rock-like anti-US national salvation stand as expounded in the 22 March 1965 statement is completely correct and that the Vietnam problem can only be settled on the basis of this stand..." A Liberation Radio commentary of September 20 referred to the NFLSV statement of March 22 and said, "Apart from that, the South Vietnamese people will not recognize any decision of any organization which wants to solve the problem in another way."

July 30, 1965: In a letter to the UN Security Council President, Ambassador Goldberg noted that responsibility to persist in the search for peace weighs especially upon the Members of the Security Council. He stated that the US stands ready, as in the past, to collaborate unconditionally with Members of the Security Council in the search for an acceptable formula to restore peace and security in Southeast Asia.

December 2, 1965: British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, on a taped television appearance in Moscow on December 2, appealed for Soviet help in bringing peace to Vietnam. He called for acceptance of a UK plan which included a conference of all nations involved in the fighting, to arrange a ceasefire. On December 9 the press reported that the UK had proposed on that day a twelve-nation appeal to North Vietnam to quit fighting and negotiate a peace and that a British message to the Soviet Union called upon the Soviets to join in signing and circulating the message among the countries which attended the 1954 Geneva Conference as well as those represented in the Vietnam International Control Commission.

On December 2 Secretary Rusk, asked to comment on the Stewart proposal, said he had not seen the exact text but said that if such a proposal "moves things along, that would be very acceptable from our point of view". On the same day President Johnson declared that the U.S. is "ready to talk unconditionally, anywhere, with peace as our agenda".

On December 17 Hanoi Radio broadcast a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry the previous day which said the British proposal of December 2 was to serve the "vile purpose" of helping the U.S. intensify the war. It said, "The DRV Government categorically rejects all British plans and proposals made under the pretense of peace. Once again, the DRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs solemnly reaffirms that the four-point stand of the DRV Government is the only basis for a correct settlement of the Vietnam problem; any solution contrary to this stand is null and void and unable to bring about genuine peace in Vietnam".

December 19, 1969: Pope Paul VI publicly appealed for a truce in Vietnam during the holiday season and efforts by all parties to move toward negotiations; he addressed a similar appeal to Hanoi through private channels. The White House on December 20 stated, "The President welcomes this new expression by the Pope of the need for peace in the world and specifically in Southeast Asia."

Ho Chi Minh, in a reply sent to the Pope on December 28, said, "The U.S. leaders want war and not peace. The talks about unconditional negotiations made by the U.S. President are merely a maneuver to cover up his plan for war intensification and aggression in Vietnam." He reiterated North Vietnam's stand as to how peace can be restored in Vietnam.

January 1966: The US continued until January 31 the pause in the bombing of North Viet-Nam initiated at Christmas, and dispatched Governor Harriman and Williams and Ambassador Goldberg on missions to seek diplomatic channels to Hanoi for negotiations and to explain the US position.

A January 4 statement of the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry said, "Recently the US Government has started a large-scale deceptive peace campaign coupled with the trick of temporary suspension of air attacks on North Viet-Nam as a sign of good will." It listed again the steps the US must take before a "political settlement of the Viet-Nam problem can be envisaged." Premier Pham Van Dong on January 8 said, "... the US ruling circles spread a deceitful smoke-screen in an attempt to soothe public opinion at home and abroad..." An NLFV Central Committee statement of January 5 said, "... the US imperialists...in covering their mad, adventurous policy of military buildup, have spread a smokescreen of false peace before public opinion and have kept harping on the trick of unconditional peace negotiations..." The statement referred to the bombing cessation as a "cunning, extremely mean and familiar trick of the US imperialists." A Liberation Radio commentary of January 7 referred to President Johnson's peace campaign as a "comedy."

January 31, 1966: Ambassador Goldberg sent a letter to Security Council President Matsui, summarizing the US position on negotiations and requesting an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the Viet-Nam situation.

According to a Hanoi broadcast of February 1, a North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokesman, referring to Ambassador Goldberg's request, said, "The DRV Government once again reiterates that internationally the consideration of the US act of war in Viet-Nam comes within the competence of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina and not of the UN Security Council. All resolutions of the UN Security Council which interfere with the Viet-Nam problem are completely null and void." Hanoi broadcast a February 2 statement of the NLFV's Central Committee which called the Goldberg proposal a "perfidious attempt" to hide under the UN banner and which said that "the Front will consider all decisions of the UN Security Council on Viet-Nam as null and void..." A Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry statement of February 2 supported "the just stand" of the DRV on this subject and said, "...the United Nations has no right whatsoever to intervene in the Viet-Nam question, and it is entirely illegal for the Security Council to discuss the question."

April 18, 1966: Senator Mansfield proposed that the US, Hanoi, and "elements in South Viet-Nam" meet at a peace conference in some Asian country. The White House and the Department of State endorsed the Mansfield proposal.

A commentary in the North Vietnamese paper Nhan Dan of April 23 called the Mansfield proposal "a fraudulent trick designed to deceive public opinion and to justify...war expansion." A North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry statement of April 25 termed the proposal "hypocritical." Peking Radio, on April 20, referred to the Mansfield proposal as a "'peace talks' hoax."

April 1966: UN Secretary General U Thant first suggested a three-point plan as the basis for a negotiated settlement, including (1) the cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam, (2) the scaling down of all military activities by all sides in Viet-Nam, and (3) the willingness to enter into discussions with those who are actually fighting.

July 7, 1966: Indian Prime Minister Gandhi made a detailed proposal for negotiations within the framework of the Geneva agreements and proposed a reconvening of the Geneva Conference. A Department of State spokesman, on July 8, said, "We welcome Prime Minister Gandhi's call for a conference as we welcome all initiatives that might lead to an honorable peace in Viet-Nam. We have long supported the reconvening of the Geneva Conference to bring about a settlement on the basis of the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962... A cessation of hostilities in both North and South Viet-Nam could be the first order of business of a reconvened Geneva Conference."

An article in the North Vietnamese Army journal Quan Doi Nhan Dan of July 19 discussed the essentials of Prime Minister Gandhi's proposals, without mentioning her or India by name, and dismissed each point in turn as imposing unacceptable obligations. On July 9 Premier Chou En-lai said the proposal "is solely designed to throw dust in the eyes of the people of the world, and that "unless the US troops are withdrawn, the reconvening of the Geneva Conference is entirely out of the question." On July 12 Foreign Minister Chen I also rejected the Indian plan and said, "The 'joint action' taken by US imperialism, Soviet modern revisionism, and the Indian reactionaries, their big scheme of 'forcing peace talks through bombing' has been at last exposed in broad daylight."

August 6, 1966: The Foreign Ministers of Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines signed a joint statement calling for Asian nations to join in a peace appeal to the leaders of all countries involved in the Viet-Nam conflict. Diplomatic notes were sent to 17 Asian countries as a follow-up to the joint statement.

A Nhan Dan article of August 8 denounced the appeal of the Association of Southeast Asia (Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia) to hold a conference to end the Vietnamese war as a "cheap farce staged by third-class henchmen of US imperialism." The article charged the US with reviving ASA "to cater for the US aggression in Viet-Nam." It said that "the US imperialists are cynically playing

the dirty peace fraud by means of their henchmen in ASA while stepping up their war activities in both North and South Viet-Nam..." A Peking broadcast of August 7 said, "Thailand Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman ... proposed at the 'Association of Southeast Asia' conference in Bangkok the establishment of a 'peace in Asia committee' to peddle the US 'peace' fraud."

August 31, 1966: The UN Secretary General again proposed three steps to end the war.

In analyzing Thant's three point proposal, Hanoi on October 6 said that while the first point (cessation of bombing of North Viet-Nam) "conforms to the requirement for a settlement of the Viet-Nam issue," the second point (mutual reduction of hostilities) was "obviously negative and clashes with the first." In addition the editorial strongly implied that Thant's third point on willingness to negotiate with all participants in the fighting was unsatisfactory, probably because it failed to accept Hanoi's claims for the Front.

September 19, 1966: Pope Paul issued an encyclical containing a plea for peace. President Johnson made a statement of support.

In an obvious reference to the Papal appeal, Radio Hanoi said that "certain religious circles, which have always chorused the US imperialists' peace song, have recently made pathetic appeals for peace in Viet-Nam."

September 22, 1966: Ambassador Goldberg, in a speech at the UN General Assembly, outlined the US proposals for a solution of the Viet-Nam problem.

Hanoi on September 24 scored Ambassador Goldberg's speech for the conditional nature of the bombing cessation offer, for the failure to recognize the NFLSV as "the sole legal representative of the South Vietnamese people," and for attempting to use the UN as an "instrument for their aggressive policy in Viet-Nam." The Front on September 27 focused their denunciation of the US peace initiative on the fact that it "refuted the role of the NFLSV." Goldberg's speech was interpreted by the Chicoms on September 25 as a new US peace talk "swindle" in collusion with the "Soviet revisionist leading group."

September 26, 1966: Philippine President Marcos announced in Honolulu that in consultation with the President of the Republic of Korea and the Prime Minister of Thailand an invitation had been extended to the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and the United States to join in a conference with the Government of South Viet-Nam. The conference would review, among other subjects, the prospects for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

North Viet-Nam on October 1 termed the upcoming Manila Conference a "war conference" convened by the US to intensify "their aggressive war in Viet-Nam and to cover up the bitter isolation of the United States in this war." The NLFSV denounced the meeting as a "conference of criminal leaders," while Peking on October 18 proclaimed that the conference "is designed to plan an intensified war in Viet-Nam and to prepare public opinion for further escalation."

September 1966: Secretary Rusk carried our basic message on negotiations to more than 100 representatives of ministerial rank at the 21st UN General Assembly.

October 6, 1966: British Foreign Secretary Brown announced a detailed six-point plan aimed at ending the Viet-Nam war and asked Gromyko to join him in reconvening the Geneva Conference.

Hanoi and the Front on October 8 and 9 respectively "sternly rebuffed" the Brown proposal as a "rehash" of the recent US peace initiatives. The Front charged that the proposal demonstrated Britain's delinquency as a Geneva Co-chairman. Peking on October 7 blasted the British initiative for attempting to shift the responsibility for the aggression from the US and for pressing for a settlement based on the Geneva Agreement, "despite the fact that the Geneva Agreement has already been torn up by the United States."

October 11, 1966: Ambassador Goldberg said that the US welcomed the proposal of the British Foreign Secretary for an immediate reconvening of the Geneva Conference and was prepared to discuss the constructive proposals of the Foreign Secretary as well as all other proposals.

October 24, 1966: At the conclusion of their meeting in New Delhi on October 24, the United Arab Republic, India and Yugoslavia issued a communique voicing concern over the dangerous situation in Southeast Asia. It called for an immediate end to the bombing of North Viet-Nam without any preconditions. It asserted that "the implementation of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and the withdrawal of all foreign troops would lead to peace" and that the participation of the NLFSV would be necessary as one of the main parties in any efforts for the realization of peace in Viet-Nam.

Peking on October 27 accused Mrs. Gandhi and Tito of trying to "peddle the peace fraud ... concocted by the United States and the Soviet Union," and labeled the communique's section on Viet-Nam as a "reproduction of U Thant's three-point 'peace proposal.'" The Chicomus failed to mention Nasser's role at the conference. To date, neither Hanoi nor the Front have publicly commented on the conference or the communique.

October 25, 1966: At the conclusion of the Manila Conference (October 21-25) the seven participating countries (Australia, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, the United States and the Republic of Viet-Nam) issued a joint communique which asserted their strong determination to continue the defense of South Viet-Nam and renewed their commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam listed six essential elements of peace. The other governments endorsed these views and declared that their forces shall be withdrawn, after close consultation, as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. The forces will be withdrawn, they agreed, as soon as possible and not later than six months after "the above conditions" have been fulfilled.

Both Hanoi and the Front gave a cold and hostile reception to the Manila Communique. The Front on October 28 described the proposal for a peaceful settlement in the communique as equivalent to "a demand for our people to lay down their arms and serve as slaves of US neocolonialism." The Chicoms labeled the six-month withdrawal pledge an "out-and-out swindle."

November 9, 1966: The Canadian Secretary of External Affairs, Paul Martin, who had held talks in Warsaw earlier, began several days of talks with Soviet leaders in Moscow on November 9. On his return he told the Canadian House of Commons that he had put forth to the Polish and Soviet leaders suggestions as to steps which might be taken "to lead us away from a military towards a political settlement."

Peking on November 15 noted Martin's visit to the Soviet Union and described it as part of the Soviet plot for "peace talks fraud." To our knowledge neither Hanoi nor the Front has publicly mentioned the Martin trip.

December 8, 1966: Pope Paul VI, in referring to the holiday ceasefires, expressed the hope that "this truce becomes an armistice and that the armistice be the occasion for sincere negotiations...which will lead to peace." He said that "if as has been announced, a further cessation of hostilities is to follow shortly on the Christmas truce, why should both parties in the conflict not join the two separate truces into a single continuous period of time, so that new ways may be explored of bringing about an honorable understanding putting an end to the conflict?" UN Secretary General U Thant endorsed the Pope's appeal the same day. A White House spokesman said on the same day that the United States Government fully shares the desire of the Pope for a peaceful solution in Viet-Nam and that "his suggestions have always received sympathetic consideration on our part, as will his most recent proposal."

A Liberation Radio broadcast on December 10 reacted negatively to the Pope's appeal and implied that the proposal was designed to take advantage of the Front's original "humanitarian" offer. A Chicom Government statement on December 15 noted the Papal appeal and commented that the Pope has "always served US imperialism in its peace talk swindles." To our knowledge Hanoi has never publicly commented on the Pope's initiative.

December 19, 1966: Ambassador Goldberg sent a letter to UN Secretary General U Thant which referred to Pope Paul's appeal that the temporary Christmas truce be transformed into a cessation of hostilities which would become the occasion for sincere negotiations. Ambassador Goldberg requested that the Secretary General take whatever steps he considered necessary "to bring about the necessary discussions" which could lead to such a ceasefire. The letter contained an assurance that the United States Government would cooperate fully with the Secretary General in getting such discussions started promptly and bringing them to a successful completion.

Mai Van Bo, the representative of North Viet-Nam in Paris, speaking on January 5, reportedly called Ambassador Goldberg's effort "the same old song." The Chinese Communists on December 20 not only denounced the Goldberg letter as "undisguised and shameless blackmail," but also criticized U Thant for having on several occasions served the US "peace talks fraud." We have noticed no Hanoi or Front comment on the Goldberg initiative.

December 30, 1966: Foreign Secretary Brown addressed messages to the United States, North Viet-Nam and the Republic of Viet-Nam proposing a three-way meeting at once to arrange a cessation of hostilities. He offered to make facilities available in any suitable British territory and to help with preparatory work. Pope Paul welcomed this proposal in a message to Prime Minister Wilson published by the Vatican on January 2.

On January 1, 1967 President Johnson, in response to a question concerning "the new British proposal on peace talks," said: "We have heard from the British. We are delighted to have their views and their suggestions. We are very agreeable and rather anxious to meet, as I have said over the past months, anywhere, any time, that Hanoi is willing to come to a conference table. We appreciate the interest of all peace-loving nations in arranging a ceasefire, in attempting to bring the disputing parties together, and in an effort to work out a conference where various views can be exchanged..."

Hanoi on January 3 denounced the British proposal as a rehash of the "deceitful shopworn clamor of the US imperialists," condemned Brown's failure to include the Front as a participant at the proposed meeting and claimed that the British initiative runs counter to Britain's responsibilities as a Geneva Co-chairman. On January 4, the Front echoed the sentiments of its northern mentor. The Chinese Communists on January 5 labeled the UK initiative as a "new trick of the great peace talk conspiracy...pursued by the United States in collaboration with the Soviet Union."

December 30, 1966: UN Secretary General U Thant, in a reply to Ambassador Goldberg's letter of December 19, reiterated his three-point program: (1) the cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam; (2) the scaling down of all military activities by all sides in South Viet-Nam; and (3) the willingness to enter into discussions with those who are actually fighting. He stated his strong belief that this program, "of which the cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam is the first and essential part, is necessary to create the possibility of fruitful discussions leading to a just and honorable settlement of the problem of Viet-Nam on the basis of the Geneva Agreements of 1954." He urged that the United States stop the bombing "even without conditions."

Mai Van Bo, the representative of North Viet-Nam in Paris; speaking on January 5, reportedly said of U Thant's efforts that "the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam rejects all intervention by the United Nations in the Viet-Nam affair for the good reason that this intervention would be contrary to the Geneva Agreements" of 1954. Peking on January 5 derided the letter of U Thant, whom it described as "another lackey of US imperialism," as "the same stuff pulled out of Johnson's portfolio."

December 31, 1966: Ambassador Goldberg, in his December 31 reply to U Thant's letter of December 30, reaffirmed United States willingness to cease the bombing of North Viet-Nam "the moment there is an assurance, private or otherwise, that there would be a reciprocal response towards peace from North Viet-Nam." Ambassador Goldberg noted, however, that an end to the conflict cannot be attained by appeals for or the exercise of restraint by only one side. He welcomed the idea of an extended holiday ceasefire and regretted that "the other parties concerned have shown no interest so far in such a ceasefire."

January 17, 1967: The Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam offered to discuss an extension of the four day Tet truce with representatives of the DRV. On January 18 an NLFV broadcast strongly criticizing this proposal, pointed out that no discussions were necessary since the Front had already made a unilateral decision on a seven-day truce and even if discussions were in order they should not be held with the North, "which has nothing to do with the military situation in the South." A January 21 Hanoi radio commentary questioned the right of Thieu and Ky, "who are but puppets of the US imperialists," to talk "pretentiously" about negotiations, and asked, "Who would care to negotiate with them?" On February 5 Foreign Minister Do officially repeated the GVN offer.

January 28, 1967: DRV Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, in an interview with Australian leftist journalist Burchett broadcast by Hanoi radio on this date, stated that "it is only after the unconditional cessation of US bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV that there could be talks between the DRV and the United States." Trinh described the four points as "the basis for the most correct political solution to the Viet-Nam problem," a basis which "fully conforms to the spirit of the five-point statement of the NLFV, the only genuine representative of the people of South Viet-Nam."

February 2, 1967: President Johnson said that he was not aware of "any serious effort that the other side has made, in my judgement, to bring the fighting to a stop and to stop the war." He reaffirmed the deep interest of the United States in a prompt and peaceful settlement of all problems in Southeast Asia.

February 8, 1967: Replying to a message from the Pope expressing the hope that the Tet truce might open the way to negotiations for a "just and stable peace", the President said, "We are prepared to talk at any time and place, in any forum, with the object of bringing peace to Viet-Nam. However, I know you would not expect us to reduce military action unless the other side is willing to do likewise. We are prepared to discuss the balanced reduction in military activity, the cessation of hostilities, or any practical arrangements which could lead to these results."

February 9, 1967: In a press conference Secretary Rusk stated:

"for some time now there has been evident a systematic campaign by the Communist side to bring about an unconditional and permanent cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam without any corresponding military action on their side in exchange for the possibility of talks -- talks which are thus far formless and without content. We cannot accept a situation in which men and arms move, without interruption by us, to cross the 17th parallel and attack Allied armed

forces and Vietnamese civilians in the South. We must know the military consequences of such a military action on our part. They must not expect us to stop our military action by bombing while they continue their military action by invasion. No one has been able or willing to give us any information on this subject."

"Let me say quietly and sincerely to all capitals on the other side: Let good sense take charge for all of us in this situation. Recognize the necessity for elementary reciprocity. Join with us in a common search for peace. Let us make use of the means available to us to exchange views and to search for those common interests upon which peace can be built. Let us relieve all the peoples concerned of the burdens of this struggle. Let us turn our hand to the urgent unfinished business of assuring a more decent future for those who have been caught up in violence for so long."

February 8-13, 1967: During the Tet (Lunar New Year) truce, the US suspended bombing for 5 days and 18 hours after many prior weeks in which the US Government had communicated to Hanoi several possible routes to peace, any one of which the US was prepared to take. Four US messages were sent to Hanoi in January and early February. On February 8 President Johnson wrote DRV President Ho Chi Minh and proposed to order the cessation of bombing against North Viet-Nam and the halt of further augmentation of US forces in South Viet-Nam as soon as he was assured that infiltration into South Viet-Nam by land and sea had stopped. The President observed that these actions of restraint on both sides would make it possible to conduct serious and private discussions leading toward an early peace.

On February 13, 1967, replying to a message from the Pope parallel to that sent President Johnson (see above), Ho Chi Minh declared that "real peace" could be restored in Viet-Nam if the "U.S. imperialists" end "unconditionally and definitively the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV, withdraw from South Viet-Nam all American and satellite troops, recognize the NLFV, and let the South Vietnamese people settle themselves their own affairs." A Nhan Dan "Commentator" article, commenting on the suspension of bombing beyond the four day truce period, said that it was "of course incompatible" with the North Vietnamese requirement that the bombings cease unconditionally and definitively."

February 13, 1967: The White House released a statement by the President announcing the resumption of full-scale hostilities after the Tet truce, including the bombing of military targets in the North, in which he said: "It had been our hope that the truce periods connected

with Christmas, New Year's and Tet might lead to some abatement of hostilities and to moves toward peace. Unfortunately, the only response we have had from the Hanoi government was to use the periods for major resupply efforts of their troops in South Viet-Nam. Despite our efforts and those of third parties, no other response has as yet come from Hanoi.

"Under these circumstances, in fairness to our own troops and those of our allies, we had no alternative but to resume full-scale hostilities after the cease-fire. But the door to peace is, and will remain, open, and we are prepared at any time to go more than halfway to meet any equitable overture from the other side."

February 15, 1967: Ho Chi Minh replied to President Johnson in highly polemical terms, essentially repeating the position set out in his letter to the Pope (see above) and again insisting that only after unconditional cessation of US bombing raids and all other acts of war against the DRV could bilateral talks take place. Both the President's letter and Ho Chi Minh's reply were released by Hanoi on March 21, 1967.

March 28, 1967: UN Secretary General U Thant made public a text of a March 14 aide-memoire which he presented to the parties directly involved in the Viet-Nam conflict proposing a general stand-still truce, preliminary talks, and reconvening of the Geneva Conference. On the same day the US made public its interim reply of March 15 and its final reply of March 18 accepting the Secretary General's three-step proposal and stating its readiness to enter immediately and constructively into discussions on the details of such a general cessation of hostilities as the first element in this three-point proposal. Hanoi vehemently attacked the U Thant proposal, stating in an April 5 commentary, for example, that the proposal was advantageous to the US because it "placed the aggressors and the fighters against aggression on the same footing," did not call for an end to US "aggression" or for US withdrawal, and contained no clause dealing with the NLF. In the words of the commentary, ". . . to speak of a political solution while continuing to refuse to accept the NFLSV as the only legal representative of the South Vietnamese people is to speak nonsense, if we do not want to say a sham."

April 10, 1967: The Ceylonese Prime Minister issued a peace plan calling for a meeting between the Saigon Government, the NLF and Hanoi to discuss the pre-conditions for a cease-fire. Under this proposal, the integrity of Viet-Nam would be guaranteed by both the United Nations Security Council and bordering states.

In response to the Ceylonese initiative, on April 12 the GVN expressed its willingness to meet with representatives from the other side and to send a representative to Ceylon or another suitable place to participate in discussions aimed at resolving the conflict.

April 11, 1967: Canadian Minister of External Affairs Paul Martin presented a 4-stage proposal for a ceasefire in Viet-Nam. Based upon the 1954 Geneva Agreements, Martin's plan called for (1) restoration of the "demilitarized character" of the 17th parallel, (2) agreement not to engage in any military activities "which differed in either scale or pattern" from current activity, plus a possible agreement to prohibit enforcement of either the North or South by "any source or quarter," (3) cessation of all hostilities, (4) return to the ceasefire of the Geneva Settlement.

On April 16, Hanoi radio described Martin's plan as a "crafty scheme of the US imperialists...which does not make a clear-cut distinction between the aggressor and those who opposed aggression."

The Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam on April 18 welcomed the Canadian plan as it felt it raised many matters worthy of attention. Accordingly the GVN proposed that a specific course of action such as a pull-back from the DMZ, inspection by the ICC, etc. be taken in pursuit of peace.

On April 19, the USG supporting the GVN statement described the Canadian proposal as a plan which offered "considerable promise for de-escalating the conflict in Viet-Nam and for moving toward an overall settlement."

April 19, 1967: In further response to the Canadian proposal the USG issued a statement calling for an extension of the DMZ through a withdrawal of DRV and US and GVN troops ten miles respectively North and South of the zone. If the DRV were willing to execute a simultaneous withdrawal, all military activities in the extended area could stop and with mutual agreement by the DRV and the GVN and US, the ICC could be invited to monitor and inspect the enlarged demilitarized area. The US and GVN, upon such a separation, would be willing to participate in talks leading to further de-escalation and settlement.

The DRV expressed its reaction to the US plan via Hanoi Radio on April 21 by calling it a "trick aimed at camouflaging the US war, escalation and violation of the whole 1954 Geneva Agreements...and the stature of the demilitarized zone." Hanoi cited the US proposal as an attempt to set up "a vast no-man's land perpetually partitioning Viet-Nam." The DRV also called on the US to cease all military activity on or over the DMZ.

On a "Liberation Radio" broadcast of April 14, the NLF described the US proposal as part of a policy "feigning peace while provoking war."

Peking reaction printed in the People's Daily (April 23) supported the DRV's rejection of the DMZ plan as a "sinister truce" aimed at rising plans for further escalation.

May 12, 1967: U. Thant appealed for a bombing halt. Thant stated the NVN regard the bombing as the first obstacle to talks and that Hanoi would be willing to talk after the cessation of bombing.

UN Ambassador Goldberg replied that the US was ready to stop bombing with the assurance that such a move would be answered by "appropriate de-escalation on the other side."

May 23-24, 1967: The United States and Government of Viet-Nam declared a 24-hour ceasefire affecting hostilities in both North and South Viet-Nam in order to observe Buddha's birthday, and in the hope that this would lead to a constructive response. Hanoi and the Viet Cong refused to observe the ceasefire. This marked the sixth suspension of bombing since May 1965.

September 1967: The United States again explored the possibility of Security Council action with members of the Council, suggesting five points as principles which it believed the Security Council might endorse in seeking a settlement based on the Geneva Accords. The United States found a widespread reluctance to act in the Security Council, and for that matter in the General Assembly, in the face of categorical opposition to United Nations involvement from the Soviet Union and North Viet-Nam.

September 2, 1967: Ambassador Goldberg again asked whether North Viet-Nam conceives that the cessation of bombing should lead to any other results than meaningful negotiation under circumstances which would not disadvantage either side. Ambassador Goldberg also asked how Hanoi's supporters would use their influence and power to move the Viet-Nam conflict promptly toward a peaceful solution, if we were to take the first step. No helpful answers to these questions have yet been received.

September 29, 1967: The President stated in his San Antonio speech that our desire to negotiate peace -- through the United Nations or out -- has been made very clear to Hanoi -- directly and through third parties. President Johnson declared:

As we have told Hanoi time and time and time again the heart of the matter really is this: The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation.

In response Radio Hanoi broadcast as follows:

"Recently, U.S. President Johnson again raised a ballyhoo about the U.S. readiness to negotiate. It is clear, however, that this is but a maneuver to cover up the fact that the United States is trying hard to intensify and widen its aggressive war against Viet-Nam."

October 30, 1967: In his US News and World Report interview President Nguyen van Thieu commented on GVN readiness to talk:

"As the legal government of South Viet-Nam, we open the door and will leave the door open to Ho Chi Minh to meet with us and discuss negotiations and peace. It does not mean that it will be the last time. The door will still be open and we will be ready to talk with North Viet-Nam at any time North Viet-Nam would like to talk with us."

December 19, 1967: In his December 19, 1967 television interview with correspondents of ABC, CBS and NBC, the President set forth five points as the basis of a solution in South Viet-Nam.

- (1) "The Demilitarized Zone must be respected as the 1954 Agreements require."
- (2) "The unity of Viet-Nam must be a matter for peaceful adjustments and negotiations."
- (3) "The North Vietnamese forces must get out of Laos and stop infiltrating. That is what the 1962 Agreements required, and it must be respected."
- (4) "The overwhelming majority of the people of South Viet-Nam want a one man-one vote constitutional government."
- (5) "The 20 per cent or so of the population now under Viet Cong control must live under a one man-one vote constitutional system if there is to be peace."

In a radio broadcast Hanoi has ridiculed the President's proposals: "It is well known," broadcast Radio Hanoi, "that the above mentioned cheap deceitful peace arguments cannot deceive anyone. A series of recent aggressive actions of the Americans have given the lie to Johnson's statements about peace."

December 21, 1967: In their joint communique at Canberra, President Johnson and President Thieu noted that:

"Both presidents agreed that their objective remained an honorable and secure peace in accordance with the basic statement of the South Vietnamese position contained in the Manila communique of October 1966 and supported by the other participants."

"They regretted that there was no sign that North Vietnam was prepared to take any of the many avenues to peace that had been opened.

"They agreed that in these circumstances there was no alternative to continuing appropriate military actions."

"They further agreed that the removal of external interference and the acceptance of this principle by all the citizens of South Vietnam were fundamental elements in any enduring and honorable peace in South Vietnam. They agreed that these elements were totally consistent with the spirit and essential terms of the Geneva agreements of 1954 and the Geneva agreements of 1962 respecting Laos."

December 29, 1967: At a reception in Hanoi on December 29, 1967 honoring representatives of the Mongolian People's Republic, North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh said:

"The U.S. Government has unceasingly claimed that it wants to talk with Hanoi but has received no response. If the U.S. Government truly wants to talk, it must, as was made clear in our statement on 28 January 1967, first of all stop unconditionally the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV. After the United States has ended the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV, the DRV will hold talks with the United States on questions concerned."
(Underlining added)

January 4, 1968: At his January 4, 1968 press conference, Secretary Rusk, in commenting on the possibility of peace talks, reminded his audience that the President had declared in San Antonio that "the United States is willing to stop all air and naval bombardment of Viet-Nam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions." "We, of course, assume, that while discussions proceed, North Viet-Nam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitations."

The Secretary indicated that this remained the position of the United States "and what we need to do is find out whether there is any increasing compatibility between the statements made by the two sides." The Secretary emphasized that the question would be pursued as to whether there had been a change in the situation.

January 16, 1968: North Viet-Nam's Delegate-General to France, Mai Van Bo, repeated in Paris that: "Talks will start after a suitable time following the unconditional halting of bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam." Bo went on to emphasize to his television audience that the conditional tense used in the January 1967 statement about starting talks was indeed changed to the future tense and that "one did not need to be a semantic expert to say that the January 28, 1967 declaration... has been made perfectly clear by the remarks of December 29."

January 18, 1968: In his State of the Union message, President Johnson said that "...our goal is peace and peace at the earliest possible moment. Right now we are exploring the meaning of Hanoi's recent statement. There is no mystery about the questions which must be answered before the bombing is stopped.

"We believe that any talks should follow the San Antonio Formula that I stated last September, which said that the bombing would stop immediately if talks would take place promptly and with reasonable hopes that they would be productive. And the other side must not take advantage of our restraint as they have in the past. This nation simply cannot accept anything less without jeopardizing the lives of our men and our allies.

"If a basis for peace talks can be established on the San Antonio foundations--and it is my hope and my prayer that they can--we would consult with our allies and with the other side to see if a complete cessation of hostilities, a really true cease-fire, could be made the first order of business."

January 25, 1968: Secretary of Defense-Designate Clark Clifford, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that he would "expect to follow the language of the President" where Mr. Johnson has stated that if the North Vietnamese would agree to start negotiations promptly and not take advantage of a pause in bombing, the United States would stop its air and sea bombardment. Mr. Clifford, in replying to a question from Senator Thurmond, said that he did not expect the North Vietnamese to stop their military activities prior to an agreed cease-fire and that he assumed "that they will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, munitions, men to South Viet-Nam." Mr. Clifford indicated to the Committee, however, that an increase of North Vietnamese military effort during negotiations would be viewed as bad faith and therefore if such is evidenced "then there is no need to negotiate."

February 8, 1968: North Viet-Nam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Day Trinh in an interview with a correspondent of Agence France Presse, made the following comments about what he termed "appropriate time" between an unconditional bombing halt and the commencement of negotiations:

"The talks will begin as soon as the United States has proved that it really stopped unconditionally the bombings and all acts of war against the DRV."

Trinh accused the "San Antonio formula" of being "the theme of a conditional halt in the bombing. Obviously the United States does not seriously want talks to settle the problem. It must be held responsible for its obstinacy."

Trinh defined the "relevant problems" mentioned to his December 29 comments, as those "questions related to a settlement of the Viet-Nam problem on the basis of the 1954 Geneva Agreements." Trinh indicated also that other questions could be raised by either side.

February 14, 1968: In a statement by Secretary Rusk issued on February 14, 1968, the Secretary summarized the Administration's assessment of recent diplomatic explorations and the effects of the recent Communist offensives throughout South Viet-Nam. The Secretary stated that:

"In recent weeks Hanoi knew that discussions of a peaceful settlement were being seriously explored; they also knew that there was a reduction of bombing attacks on North Viet-Nam, specifically in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas during these explorations. Their reply was a major offensive through South Viet-Nam to bring the war to the civilian population in most of the cities of that country. Their preparations for a major offensive in the northern provinces of South Viet-Nam continue unabated."

The Secretary further stated all explorations to date have resulted in a rejection of the San Antonio formula. However, all the proposals made by the US for peace in Southeast Asia continue to be valid, and specifically the San Antonio formula put forward by President Johnson in September remains the basis for our position.